



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY June 23 & BEYOND”

“Our Faith ‘Incomplete’ without the Corpus Christi”



In 2012 Bavaria revives a 17th century custom of Corpus Christi procession down Lake Stafflesee

On Sunday, June 23, our parish will commemorate Corpus Christi. No, not the town in Texas, but that for which the town in Texas was named: The Body (corpus) and Blood of Jesus Christ (Christi).

From the age of 16, Juliana of Liège (1193-1252), recurrently received the same vision when she knelt in prayer: A brilliant moon continually appeared before her with one small portion obscured and invisible. St. Thomas Aquinas was living then, and so was King St. Louis, but God chose neither the learning of the one nor the royal power of the other to be the means of bringing forward His desire for the Church to finally bring forward such an important devotion.

So it was that in the 13th century when Our Lord chose that the devotion to the Real Presence in the Body and Blood of Christ should be instituted, He had recourse to a simple nun in a vision. It was a persistent vision, even peskily so, that Juliana, in the Augustinian canonry of Mont Cornillon, tried in vain to chase it away. Finally, Our Lord Himself came to explain it to her.

He said to her it was to show that the liturgical year of the Church would remain incomplete until the Blessed Sacrament had a feast of its own, and He wished it to be instituted for the following reasons:

- *First*, in order that correct doctrine of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church might receive aid from the institution of this festival at a time when the faith of the world was growing cold and heresies were rampant.
- *Second*, the faithful who love and seek truth and piety could draw from this source of life new strength and vigor to walk continually in the way of virtue.
- *Third*, irreverence and sacrilegious behavior toward the Divine Majesty in the Blessed Sacrament might, by sincere and profound adoration, be extirpated and repaired.

Then He told her to announce to the Christian world His will that this feast should be observed by all.

We have seen this kind of interaction before in the Christian and Jewish record of God's revelation to certain individuals. And in the same way as so many others (like Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Mary, even Peter) Juliana the nun was fearful, and her immediate response was to beg Our Lord to be released from the charge. Our Lord answered her that the solemn devotion which He ordered to be observed even though it was to be begun by her, it was to be received and spread especially by the poor and lowly.

What does anyone do when they have been impressed with an important piece of information, or to propagate a new way of thinking or living for more than yourself? Very few of us would just jump right out there and get it going. The rest of us will hold onto it; perhaps for "more information", or just to see if it will stick around for awhile and then promise to get started talking about it, or like the man of one talent, bury it! Well, in the case of Juliana, she kept the whole thing secretly in her heart for twenty years; she dared not reveal it to anyone, and yet an interior impulse urged her on so that she could not forget it. As one biographer stated it, "So terrible was her repugnance for the mission assigned to her that she shed tears of blood over it."

She finally told her spiritual director, a priest who would eventually be elected Bishop of Verdun. Yes, this is the same Verdun in France which, almost exactly 700 years later in 1916 would be the epicenter of the disastrously costly Battle of Verdun. The Battle in WWI is somewhat illustrative of the battle within the Church in the 1200's to have this feast day of Corpus Christi accepted. Eventually, that same spiritual director, then elected Bishop of Verdun, then Patriarch of Jerusalem, and then elected the Pope (Urban IV) would settle the matter and provide the authority for the entire Western Church to commemorate on a feast day of its own, the Body and Blood of Jesus.

As you can imagine (and this is well before the Reformation of the 15th century) the

primary argument by the educated clergy and monks of the day was that the Daily Sacrifice of the Mass (Holy Eucharist) was sufficient to commemorate the love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament - without a special day being particularly assigned for that purpose.

I happen to liken this argument to the kind of argument that might say birthdays are unnecessary as long as the person celebrating is still alive!

Because there was so much upheaval within the Church – and continuing political and civil unrest engendering armed conflict continued to follow her, even if not necessarily about her – she had to flee from place to place. You could say the spiritual battle to keep her quiet was great, and intense.

Finally, she took up residence in the Cistercian Abbey at Salzingers, and then at Fosses-les-Villes, where she lived in seclusion until her death. Yet no earthly troubles could make her forget the task that Our Lord had assigned her. She died before the feast day had been accomplished, yet she had done enough in her lifetime to share the vision. In her wanderings, she had met with a few men with devotion and learning to defend the feast of the Blessed Sacrament and they helped to spread the devotion, especially among the simple people. And, finally, with Pope Urban's declaration in 1264, the task given by Christ to Sister Julian was fulfilled.

One thing we learn, if nothing else, that if the Lord Jesus Christ should give you a vision to share—even if you are shaking your head that that might even be possible, or even if you struggle with whether it was from God, or just your imagination – then do what I have learned to do:

- 1) err on the side of sharing what you have received (try not to bury it), and
- 2) start sharing it by talking with a trusted, spiritually mature member of the Body of Christ.

Father Robert Eaton, Interim Rector

Readings for this Sunday – A Special Observance of the Feast of Corpus Christi
Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a Psalm 116:10-17 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, 16-17,
John 6:47-58

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: **Feast of Corpus Christi**

8:30a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn High Mass (Church)

—The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY

AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)

SUNDAY

The Third Sunday after Pentecost

8:00am Low Mass

10:30am Solemn Mass